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# MONTANA LETTER

February 28, 1972

## NEW COMMITTEEMEN VISIT STATE OFFICE

One of the activities which we find quite enjoyable is the annual "get acquainted" gathering with newly-elected county committeemen. Recently we had this pleasure again when some 13 committeemen who began new terms on January 1 visited the State office.

The one-day program was informal, including discussions with the State committee and executive director and short explanations of various activities by program specialists.

Since a number of wives were also able to come, we had a tour of some University facilities and a tour of the State office for them. The committeemen and their wives had a better opportunity to get acquainted with the State office people, and vice versa, at a no-host dinner on the evening before the meeting.

Committeemen who attended and the counties they represent are: Harold Bird and Ted Hirsch, Custer; Christ Diegel, Dawson; Harold Wyrick, Fallon;

George Dawson, Jefferson; Walter Myllymaki, Judith Basin; Alfred Sasse, Park; Robert Lettenga, Pondera; Fred Clark, Roosevelt; Terrill Tollefson, Sweet Grass; Harold Gaarder, Teton; and James Ott, Golden Valley.



New techniques in aerial photography and "sensing" by satellite was one of the subjects discussed with newly-elected ASC committeemen at a recent "get acquainted" meeting at the State office. Taking a longer look at some of the aerial photography are (l to r): Christ Diegel, Dawson County; Harold Wyrick, Fallon County; and Harold Bird and Ted Hirsch, Custer County.

Unfortunately, as we all know, there are many farming and ranching activities which make it difficult to select a meeting date when everyone can attend. We hope those committeemen who haven't yet had an opportunity to visit the State office to meet the people and talk about our work, may be able to make next year's meeting.



## COMMITTEE CONFERS ON CONSERVING BASES

Earlier this month the State Committee was invited to meet with representatives of the MGGA to hear their case for adjustment of conserving bases. Representatives of several agricultural groups attended and had an opportunity to discuss their views with us.

Conserving bases have been part of the farm scene since 1962. At that time they were authorized as a means of production control under the Agricultural Act of 1961. As

originally determined, they were the average acreage of conserving uses (such as summer fallow and idle cropland) and conserving crops (like hayland and cropland pasture) on a farm during the years 1959 and 1960.

These years were used because they were the most recent years when there were no restrictions on total cropland useage and no programs offering payments as incentives to production.

Since that time farmers have been eligible for payments for adjusting their production of wheat and feed grains only if they maintain on their farms acreages of conserving crops and uses equal to the farm conserving base. This acreage used to meet the conserving base requirement may be grazed, hayed or utilized for other conserving purposes.

In addition to maintaining the conserving base acreage, farmers receiving payments since 1962 under the various programs offered have

helped balance supply with demand by setting aside or diverting additional acreage from all production.

The accompanying chart, showing relationships among several wheat producing states, is based on cropland

STATE	1971 Cropland (acres)	Conserving Base			Reduction as % of Cropland	Cons. Base as % of Cropland		% Increase in Land for Cropping 1966-71
		1966 (acres)	1971 (acres)	Reduction 1966-71 (acres)		1966	1971	
Colo.	9.7	4.6	2.7	1.9	19.48	47.41	27.9	37.04
Idaho	5.6	2.5	1.6	.9	16.41	44.68	28.3	29.86
Kansas	29.7	7.5	5.4	2.1	6.99	25.22	18.2	9.34
Minn.	22.1	4.5	2.6	1.8	8.37	20.17	11.8	10.49
Nebr.	20.3	4.5	3.1	1.4	7.81	22.27	15.5	8.76
No. Dak.	27.0	8.0	5.0	3.0	11.05	29.52	18.5	15.68
Oklahoma	13.5	2.5	1.6	.9	6.97	18.77	11.8	8.58
So. Dak.	17.8	4.2	3.3	.9	4.99	23.35	18.4	6.51
Texas	35.8	4.7	2.5	2.1	5.96	13.01	7.0	6.85
Montana	14.5	7.7	5.8	1.9	13.04	53.03	40.0	27.77

(all acres in millions) (Computations based on figures before rounding.)

and conserving base figures presented to us at the meeting referred to above. We were advised that relatively little adjustment in conserving bases was made between the time they were established and 1966. Therefore, the 1966 base seems a fair basis for comparison between States to reflect their historic cropping pattern prior to the advent of direct payment programs in 1962.

Most of the discussion centered on adjustments of conserving bases. Advocates of further adjustment contend that Montana farmers and ranchers, despite the adjustments of the last two years, need their bases reduced further in order to compete effectively with other areas.

We agree that Montana farmers need to make the fullest possible use of their agricultural resources. We urged all those present to suggest ways this can be accomplished while recognizing the need to reduce total agricultural production, the intent of current farm programs, and the conserving base con-





The ladies who accompanied their committeemen-husbands to Bozeman for the recent "get acquainted" meeting also had a tour of the State ASCS office. Left to right are: Mrs. Harold Bird, Volborg; Mrs. Ted Hirsch, Miles City; Mrs. Harold Gaarder, Fairfield; Mrs. James Ott, Ryegate; Mrs. Robert Lettenga, Conrad; Mrs. James Chvilicek, Gildford; Mrs. Walter Myllymaki, Stanford; Mrs. Alfred Sasse, Wilsall; and Mrs. George Dawson, Boulder.

cept. Conserving bases provide a limitation on unusual cropping of land normally used for conserving purposes. This contributes to reduction of acreage producing crops which the market cannot absorb at this time and this, in essence is the reason for set-aside payments.



Looking over a new type of aerial photography during the recent "get acquainted" meeting for new county committeemen at the State ASCS office are (left to right): Walter Myllymaki, Judith Basin County; Robert Lettenga, Pondera County; James Chvilicek, Hill County; and Harold Gaarder, Teton County.

## GRAIN MEN HAVE NEW OPTIONS

Two announcements of interest to grain growers have been made recently which we want to bring to your attention.

First, loans on warehouse-stored wheat of the 1970 and 1971 crops will be

eligible for extension through the 1972-73 storage period. This will extend them to May 31, 1973. Announcement has not yet been made regarding extended warehouse loans for oats or barley.

Second, producers having farm-stored barley under price support loan may deliver it prior to maturity (May 31) without losing their storage payment on resale barley or having a storage deduction made on current loans.

Producers who don't want to deliver barley will



still have the opportunity to reseal it under the program announced earlier covering the 1968, 1969, 1970 and 1971 crops. The delivery option is designed to move some of the grain from farm stored positions and increase the current barley inventory of commodity credit corporation to cover potential dispositions. The option will also allow producers to deliver before spring load limits on roads are imposed and help to avoid rail congestion by moving before the regular delivery period begins after May 31.

### **SPREADING IT THIN AND QUICK**

PRICE SUPPORT FOR FLAX-SEED produced this year will be at the rate of \$2.50 per bushel. This is the same level as offered for the 1971 crop...SHEEP AND LAMB NUMBERS continued to decline in 1971 for the 12th consecutive year, according to USDA's Economic Research Service. Reductions average 4 percent a year since 1960...USDA's CORN PURCHASE PROGRAM, ordered by Secretary Butz in December, has been terminated. The government bought slightly more than 13 million bushels in turning the situation from a threat of surplus to "a freestock deficit situation" USDA explained ...CONSUMERS LAST YEAR PAID \$21 more for a "market basket" list of food items but the farmer got only \$1 of the increase. This

netted the farmer 38 cents of each dollar spent on food, down one cent from 1970...USDA DISTRIBUTED A RECORD AMOUNT of food last year to

more than 14.5 million needy people through food stamp and commodity programs. In addition, 7.3 million needy children received free and reduced rate school lunches. Both totals are more than twice as large as in 1969...GLACIER COUNTY HAS BEEN approved for operation of an emergency livestock feed program. Qualified livestock growers will be able to buy government-owned feed grains at reduced rates to prevent liquidation of basic breeding herds...EXPORTS OF AGRICULTURAL products set a calendar-year high of \$7.2 billion in 1970, then went on to a new fiscal year record for 1970-71 of \$7.8 billion. This latest record tops the former one of 1966-67 by \$988 million -- and is 15 percent greater than our farm export value in 1969-70.....

### ***People Pressures***

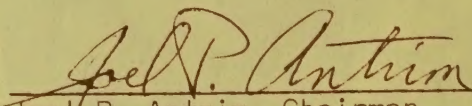
"No reader will come away satisfied that all is well," says the preface to the 1971 Yearbook of Agriculture. The contributing authors, however, convey an undercurrent of optimism, as they examine and tackle many problems associated with population pressures.

The Yearbook's theme is *A Good Life for More People*.

Maybe another 75-100 million people will be added to the Nation's population by the 21st Century. Where will they live and work? We may need 400 or more new cities and towns by the year 2000, many of them to be located in rural America. Can they be provided?

Among the book's 80 articles are "100 Million More People Coming Up?," "Population Distribution Issues," "Quality of Life in the Rural Community," "The Task Ahead for Food and Fiber," "The Future of Farmers and Farming," and "Pollution Poses Threat to Man, Farms, Nature."

For copies of the Yearbook, write the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Price is \$3.50

  
Joel P. Antrim, Chairman  
Montana State ASC Committee  
P.O. Box 670, Bozeman 59715